

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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McGarvey 202/343-5634

MUSKOX HUNT SCHEDULED IN ALASKA

Public hunting of muskox on the Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge will be permitted in a split season this fall and next winter, Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced in the Federal Register July 31.

The regulations take effect August 31, 1975.

No more than 50 bulls may be taken during two hunting seasons--10 from September 1 to October 31, 1975, and the rest from February 1 to March 31, 1976.

Hunting will be allowed only by permit issued by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and validated prior to the hunt by the refuge manager at the Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge.

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge except during periods of complete snow cover. They may not be used within one mile of any shoreline or within one mile of any muskox or area known to be occupied by muskox. Motorized snow vehicles or boats may be used to remove legally harvested muskox. Boats are prohibited from approaching or landing on the island shoreline on Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge within one mile of any muskox or area known to be occupied by muskox.

Proposed special regulations concerning muskox hunting on Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge were published in the Federal Register on June 27, 1975. At that time it was proposed to allow the killing of 25 muskox during a fall hunt and 25 in a spring hunt, for a total of 50 muskox.

The final regulations still allow for a maximum of 50 muskox to be killed but the State of Alaska decided to limit the fall season kill to 10 animals to insure that the Nunivak Island residents can provide accommodations and visitor services on this remote island while only a limited number of visitors are present. Further minor adjustments for future hunts may be required, once these logistical questions have been answered, after experience gained during the first hunting season.

The current muskox population on Nunivak Island is approximately 600. The island can only support about 400 animals. It is proposed to reduce the herd over several years by four methods: (1) transplants to other suitable ranges in cooperation with Alaska State authorities, (2) donations to zoos and museums, (3) permit hunting under joint supervision with State authorities, and (4) slaughter of excess animals not removed by the three foregoing methods.

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